2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

173 Ngoni tradition placed the departure of the two main groups under the leadership of Zwangendaba Jere and Ngwana Maseko during Shaka's wars, according to some traditions just before, and to others just after, the death of Zwide, ruler of the Ndwandwe people. The separate departure of the two Ngoni groups which later formed the two kingdoms was determined partly by their separate leadership under the Jere and Maseko clans, partly by their march by different routes to the Zambesi and after crossing it, and partly by the clan descent names of the Swazi element in the two kingdoms, which with few exceptions were different.

[539] Two traditional songs, sung at marriages, or dances at the Paramounts' villages, and the first in the church of the Scottish mission at Ekwendeni in north Nyasaland, reminded the Ngoni of their departure from Natal, of their separation from the Ndwandwe people under Zwide, and of the hazards of a small military band fighting its way northwards.

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All the nations
Are gathered together against us.
How shall we fight?
They are called together against us.
Whence shall we summon help?
The big husky oxen, ha!
They are called together against us.
We are reinforced by whom?

It is because of Zwide, chief of the Ndwandwe people
That though I lie down I cannot sleep.
O Zwide, chief of the Ndwandwe people!
Though I lie down I cannot sleep.
Shaka scatters us among the forests of Sochangane land.

173 There were several informants in both Ngoni kingdoms who had preserved the story of the departure of the Ngoni from the south. F. M. Cibambo in his book gathered together the traditions and gave what he considered the most authentic version of the departure. One [114] text from the northern kingdom is given here, partly because it was typical of the kind of material Cibambo had to work on, and also because the author, Mlonyeni Jere, had heard it from his mother who, as a young girl, had lived at the court of Zwangendaba. The text gives the genealogy of Zwangendaba, and the connexion of his line with Zwide, ruler of the Ndwandwe people. It emphasizes the immediate cause of Zwangendaba's departure—namely the fear of meeting Shaka and his warriors in open battle, and the fact that he was not called a chief until he had made a breach with Zwide. The summons to the mourning for his uncle Mafu, which he ignored, was considered by the [57] Ngoni to be the final act by which Zwangendaba cut himself off from

national ritual of the first-fruits ceremony (*incwala*), which brought all the people to the royal village, was also abandoned before the Ngoni kingdoms were finally established, for no old person alive in the 1930's had seen the *incwala* ceremony.

(d) *The ceremonial pattern*

Ngoni songs and dances were performed without the accompaniment of drums and the words of the songs sung in the 1930's were in the Ngoni language. The war-dance, *Igubo*, was still danced at the royal village and at the funerals of Paramounts and Royal Sisters. The *ngoma* dance, performed after the harvest by young men and girls, was encouraged by the two Ngoni Paramounts, who endeavoured to prohibit other dances which were not of Ngoni origin.

Ceremonial dress, especially the war-dress of the men, was well preserved by heads of clans in the 1930's in the central Ngoni kingdom. In both kingdoms the Ngoni leading women wore their traditional head ornaments on the head and neck and arms, and tied their clothes on festive occasions in the way in which their ancestors wore the long lengths of soft dressed leather.

Only in Ngoni families were to be found the making of milk curds (*amasi*), the cooked blood (*idabendi*), and the stamped maize (*isinkubi*), all of which were traditional foods brought by them from the south.

(e) *The linguistic pattern*

In the 1930's the Ngoni language had almost disappeared as a home language, except in Chief Mperembe's area in the northern kingdom. The majority of the older men could still speak and understand Ngoni, and nearly all the men who had been away to work in Southern Rhodesia or the Transvaal had renewed their knowledge of Ngoni or learnt to understand it from working with men who spoke Ndebele, Zulu or Swazi. The texts in this book from the northern kingdom were given in the Ngoni language and translated for me by Y. M. Cibambo. His own texts were written for me in English. The texts from the central kingdom were given in Nyanja and translated by me. The vernacular terms used in this book illustrate the continued use of Ngoni terms for traditional offices and objects, though in the central kingdom many of these were being replaced by Nyanja terms. Words of traditional songs, some ritual formulae, some forms of address, some titles of senior persons or groups —all these were in Ngoni. The younger generation, however, especially if they had not been south and heard Zulu or Ndebele, were not able to make any of the clicks, or to pronounce such double consonants as *dl* and *bl*.

The Ngoni were punctilious about etiquette, and especially about the linguistic terms required by good manners for greeting persons of different rank and seniority, thanking for gifts or for an audience, taking

2: Read E-S (1935-1939) 1956
FRS Ngoni FRS

had been killed it was not permitted to show his grief before the army had returned and mobilized in the kraal.

When the sections marched back to the village the first sections to go out to war came last and the one that had been last now led the way. The army never entered the Paramount's village in the afternoon but in the morning or before midday. They did this because it took a long time to tell all the news of the war, so if the army arrived near the village in the afternoon they slept in grass-shelters outside.

When the army was ready to enter, the sections were set in order, each one told off to follow another and each one chose its own song for the entry. When they sang the warriors covered their heads with their shields, with their spears in the middle of the shields. While they were singing one warrior of the section would jump out in front and dance his own praise-dance and the others let him; when he had fallen into the ranks again, they took up the section-song. The songs sung at the entry to the kraal were called *imihubo*. These were different from *ligubo* for they were sung by mouth only, whereas a *ligubo* was sung with stamping of the feet.

When the warriors marched on the cattle track there was heard a confused noise of singing and shouting praises. All the warriors marched very slowly as they sang, section by section but crowding together. When they came close to the gateway they stood and waited to let those who had not bloodied their spears have their dance out, because once inside only the 'killers' might dance before the Paramount and the headmen. When they stood they were as though the kraal were built of men but they left a space in the middle for the Paramount and headmen to sit and watch. For a little time the warriors danced their own praise-dances and these were chiefly those whose bravery was well known.

After these had danced a little there was a shout for silence, and all kept silent waiting for the words of the war *indona*. He came out from the throng and began to dance while all the warriors responded to his war-cry or praise-names. After he had finished he began to tell the story. He began by saying that in such and such a section, so and so had been first to enter the stockade, or to throw a spear first which killed a man inside. In all the sections he went over those whose names had been taken by the *izindona*; if he forgot anything or the name of a 'killer' he went and asked the *indona* of the section to help him. Whenever he mentioned a name, the warrior jumped forward and danced so as to be known to the Paramount and all the men. Then the Paramount and the headmen chose one of themselves to reply and thank the army; sometimes it was the chief *indona*. Before he began he also danced a little, then spoke praising or blaming. After he had finished he danced again and sat down among his peers. This the Ngoni called *ukudumisela inyi*, thanking in respect for the army.

Demobilization and purification

When all was finished in the kraal the warriors scattered and went to their villages to take off all their war equipment and to put their shields on the *mpalane*, the resting place or bedstead of shields. Then they sat down by their big house and were greeted by their wives, parents, children and friends. The custom was the same as that on the birth of a child, the

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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The *intelezi* was made from the roots of a creeper and a bush which grew on the banks of rivers. These roots were burned over the fire, pounded and mixed with water. The warriors were given some to lick on the tips of their fingers, some was smeared inside their shields, and the rest was beaten in a gourd till it foamed. The 'war doctor' took the tail of a *genet* or of a *zorilla* and dipped it in the foam and sprinkled the warriors as they finally passed out of the gateway of the kraal on the campaign. This medicine was for strengthening them and also for making them 'slippery', so that the enemy spears would glide by them and not pierce them, and they could slip between the posts of the enemy stockade. After being sprinkled with the *intelezi* no one could sleep with his wife or any other woman, as he would risk spoiling the effect of the medicine and therefore would be more liable to be killed.

The *inkhosa* was a spear with a barbed hook. The Paramount threw it in front of the army as they stood in the kraal until all the warriors had left. It was then put back in the *inkhosha* where it was kept in the care of the owner of that hut.

There were thus three functions to be performed, each by one of the war medicines. The *intelezi* was to strengthen and protect individual warriors. The *isinqe* was the symbol of their Paramount and their kingdom leading them to war and weakening the enemy. The *inkhosa* was the symbol of invincibility, administered by the Paramount.

There were two stages of assembling in the Paramount's village before a campaign. The first followed the initial summons to mobilize, when the local companies (*amabandla*) marched into the kraal, sorted themselves into age regiments (*amabutho*) and sang their regimental songs. Then followed the *ligubo*, the war-dance, when the warriors wore their full war-dress, and the women joined in. There was no individual dancing but a working up of corporate feeling through the dancing and songs. The Ngoni used no drums in their music, relying on achieving rhythm and unison by the stamping of their feet and their singing. After this dance the warriors left for their villages, while at the Paramount's village preparation was made for food and stuff for the campaign. Hard cakes of roasted bullrush millet, kaffir-corn and groundnuts pounded together, and dried meat, were the main supplies carried. At the second summons the warriors returned in their companies with their carriers. These carriers, who were usually young boys, carried the war-dresses and ornaments wrapped in a mat, and the food supplies.

Since on this final meeting depended much of the ultimate success of the campaign, only the warriors and the senior men were present, and all women and young children were excluded from the kraal. After the objectives of the fighting had been explained the warriors were addressed by the old men and exhorted to be brave and to help their comrades, and then the final medication by the 'war doctor' took place. The separation of the army from the civil population was complete until their return

2: Read E-S (1935-1939) 1936
FRS Nguni FRS

fresh detachment came into the village from another part of the country. The corpse was finally carried in a cow-skin from the hut to the grave between a double line of warriors singing *ligubo* songs and thumbering with their shields knocking against their knees.

The only relics, therefore, of the military tradition which could be observed in the Nguni kingdoms in the 1930's were related either to the national gatherings at the Paramount's village, or to the mourning ritual for the royal line. The knowledge of the songs and the war-dances was preserved by the senior leading men and women of the umu-Zanbani class. The songs which follow were sung, except for the last one, in both Nguni kingdoms, and not only when *ligubo* dances took place. Some were sung at marriage ceremonies, and some formerly as *umtondo* songs at the pre-marriage rite for girls. In northern Nguniland the last two songs were sung in the churches, and tunes of other well-known war songs were used in the churches of the Scottish mission with different words written for them. Most of the songs when translated sound very brief. They were less brief when sung in the Nguni language since there was repetition of certain lines, with repeated refrains, and with a series of 'sounds' such as *heya ho, ai, ye ye* which accompanied the stamping of feet and the clash of shields. These untranslatable 'sounds' were sometimes the only part of the song which was known by the younger men who had never used the Nguni language, and they chanted them in the right places as a chorus.

The first four songs were all intended to encourage the warriors at the time of mobilisation before going out on a campaign. They reminded the singers that in the use of the short stabbing spear the Nguni armies were stronger than their enemies; that they brought their fighting skill from the south-east; that, though the fight might be long, rest would come in the evening; and that the army belonged to the Paramount, the head of the kingdom. The fifth song suggested the kind of warning given to warriors by the old men—that they should not give in after a fight, but pursue the enemy and capture their cattle. The sixth song, though the reference to Longiyeka was obscure, was said to be a warning against treachery and revolt in the army. The seventh song had three themes: that death was the lot of every man, and the earth where the grave would be dug was never satisfied (*akumwa* means 'to be satisfied'); that no one would escape the universal fate of death, from the senior men wearing the head-plumes to the common people and the cattle; and that the ancestors already buried in the land would be joined by those then alive. The terms used in this song to describe the social groups among the Nguni people were those which will occur throughout this book.

1. No Paramount can be poor because of the spear.
   Then why are you running away?

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FRS Ngoni FRS

The *ishosi* was all this time as if he were mourning and fasting. He was in the house. His body was painted with medicines, black, red and white, and round his loins was painted with black medicine. He was kept naked except for the cover of his foreskin. They fed him with the first-fruits mixed with medicines. They said that both the Paramount and all the people were fasting and under discipline at that time.

When the time for closing the *inwanda* came, they again took the fruit spouts and threw it in among the dancers and called out 'inwanda mbe-*kanjiwa*', 'the *inwanda* is closed'. Then the people began to separate and to go home, still with the songs on their lips, and on the way cutting juicy stalks of new maize and picking leaves of pumpkins, which meant that the new crops were set free.

Three two fragments of the old *inwanda* songs, which, like the war songs, were full of 'sounds' like *ai ai, eni ya*, were the only ones preserved. They were known only by one or two old men among the northern and central Ngoni.

1. He rescues the one who hates the chief.
Did you not see him?
You have seen him.

2. You who are rejected
They are carrying him lightly
To thrash him
He, the stiff-necked one.

The Royal Shadow

The special relationship between a new *ishosi* of the Mumbo clan and a member of the Ngono clan was personal and individual. I have translated it as 'royal shadow', since in discussing the relationship with leading members of the Ngoni, Nyanga and Phungwaka clans the word *mwasi* was the one most frequently used. *Mwasi* is the term used for the shadow of a person or object cast by the sun; also for shade from the sun; also in modern phraseology for a photograph, where it is generally used in its double form, *mwasimwasi*. In the descriptions of this relationship there seemed almost a reluctance to use a definite term. The informants kept on saying that the Ngono boy was *mwapo mwasi*, like a shadow. While they enumerated the many things he did with the Paramount, they avoided giving him or his relationship any specific name.

This relationship began at the accession of a new Paramount and lasted until his death when the Ngono man leaped on to the funeral pyre, and it was marked by certain special features. On the death of the old Paramount, and before the new Paramount was given the medicine for strengthening him, a boy of the Ngono clan was sent 'to enter the chieftainship' with the Paramount. Many cattle from the herd belonging to the big house were given to the Ngono family from whom the boy

2: Read E-9 (1939-1939) 1956
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thanking, and then all thanked the thanking together. This included all the men who were in the royal household though they did not take part in the feast or the presents. The latter would first thank '*E-Jere*' and then all would follow together, '*E-Jere*', or the clan name of the one who was the giver. The Paramount, if he gave presents to the people, was not thanked by his clan name as other people. He was thanked by '*Bayete*' as was done when saluting him. Likewise those who received the title *Nkosi* were thanked by that title when they gave presents to people.

On ceremonial occasions visitors to the royal village heard the *izibongo* or praise-songs of the Paramount. These were songs referring to great deeds and notable incidents both in the lifetime of the reigning Paramount and in the lives of his predecessors. They were distinct from the *izitukwane*, which were lengthy epithets added to the clan names and spoken when thanking a well-known man or woman for their gifts. The *izitukwane* could be said by anyone, since each person of note had his own which were well known. The *izibongo* could only be spoken or sung by an *umbongi* or official 'praiser'. Such a person was a man of good memory and possessing eloquence. The chief was thought to be the seat of wisdom and eloquence, and a man who composed praise-songs, as distinct from repeating well-known ones, had to have the faculty of finding the right words, while new songs of this kind were generally invented on a sudden inspiration.

The occasions when the praise-songs were recited were when important visitors came to the royal village; when beasts were slaughtered in the ancestor cult; at special dances at the royal village or at the feasts of the Paramount. On such occasions the official praiser stood up in the kraal, everyone kept silent and did not move, and after a pause he began to call out '*Bayabonga inkosi*', 'let us praise the Paramount'. In repeating the praise-songs he began with those of the immediate ancestor of the Paramount, and then went on to those of earlier ancestors. At the end he shouted '*Bayete*' and all the people replied '*Bayete*'. Examples of the praise-songs of Zwangendaba and his father Hlacwayo of the northern kingdom and of Ngwana, father of Mpeta, of the central Ngoni kingdom are given at the end of the chapter.

The tension caused by the extreme formality in the behaviour of the Paramount, his courtiers and his visitors was lightened by the presence of a court jester. Informants were agreed that such an individual was usually present to amuse the Paramount with his sallies and gestures and clown-like tumbling about. Dr. Laws referred to such a jester at the court of Mbelwa I when the Livingstonia Mission was making its first settlement in northern Nyasaland.[1] I saw a jester who came with Paramount Zimambira Mtawalire from Portuguese territory when he and his officials visited Mtakhatha for the war-dance at the mourning for Bambo

[1] Livingstonia, W. P. *Laws of Livingstonia*. London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1921, p. 200.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

kingdom and from Portuguese territory arrived to mourn. The grave was made at the edge of the kraal and the kraal fence enlarged to take it in so that the cattle might walk on it.

In this chapter I have tried to bring together some of the chief elements in the position of the Paramount, and in the performance of his duties, which were remembered by the old men as having been characteristic of pre-European days. Some of these features, as I have indicated, had disappeared in the 1930's. Others survived and will be illustrated in Chapter V. Chapters III and IV on the royal women and on the officials in the kingdoms will illustrate the importance of the leading women in the Ngoni kingdoms, and the hierarchy of officials already mentioned in Chapter II of Part I.

The texts of the praise-songs which conclude this chapter are given because in the 1930's they were still recited in the royal villages and were a feature of all public ceremonies. Most of the allusions in the texts were obscure. Cibamba, who translated them for me and who consulted other older men, did not recognize some of the names or the meaning of the attributes. Some names corresponded with those given in Part I in the texts about the departure of the Ngoni in their two groups from Natal (see pp. 7, 8), such as the Nqumayo people whom Zwide ruled over, Ngaba who left with Ngwana, Nyathi who tried to prevent Ngwana from leaving. But in the way in which they were used in the 1930's these praise-songs had little meaning for those who heard them except as a form of salutation to the Paramount.

Praises of Zwangendaba, son of Hlatswayo

Zwangendaba whose intention it is to be black who denies it to be light.
Go away, let us go, you the rejected one.
We are like a man of the Ntungwa, a fat one; there the people die as fat ones.
Ngaba you must eat people. Leave the cattle.
Ngaba son of Lushwana, there was confusion.
There he is, there he is, where do they see him? They see him in the fences of his mothers.
One who is angry because the cattle have gone with the calves.
His great cunning overcomes the magic stones of the doctors.
I have gone away until I have seen Lebombo Mountains.
We are suffering on account of the great dispute with the Nqumayo people.
You are seeing the hoes which are waiting for you, the hoes which cannot be used for hoeing.
He saw it, the short grass, he was biting it hastily.
He saw it, the ditch, his foot slipped into it.
He who divided the water with a stick at the Zambesi.
He who remembered the cattle of the Balunjana.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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Praises of Hlamuyo, son of Magangazita

Hlamuyo the dwarf who weaves trail his cloth.
Whereas the tall people trail their clothes.
Meat eaten with knives of iron,
If it is not eaten with forks it is rotten.
Hlamuyo whose bodily vigour is finished off compared with Hlamuyo of former times.
Gums of sheep and colour is not burned with burning; it burns very slowly, drop by drop.

Praises of Nguana, son of Gasaani

You who eat the trees and who eat the termites,
You the locust, the grasshopper who fixed in your hair the feathers of the locust,
Who went below and climbed up, and went to bring the morning star of the dawn,
You go, since you are rejected; you go and bring the armies of wild animals; those of cattle will be much disposed.
You who remember the feuds of long ago.
In descending, you descend together into the mountains.
You who drank the blood of cattle,
You who separated from the people of Shaka, Shaka of Mbelebele's kraal,
You who separated from the people of Nyathi the son of Mashobane; it thundered, it was cloudy.
Those resemblers cattle which were finished by wolves.
You who originated with the people of Mzilikazi,
You who originated with the people of Mpakana son of Lidunga,
You who originated with the people of Ndwandwe.

CHAPTER III

THE ROYAL WOMEN

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An early traveller in central Nguniland in 1886 remarked on the number of 'true Ngoni women' to be found there, who were 'easily distinguished from the other women by their light colour and by being taller and stouter'. He went on to say: 'The king's houses at Livinini were 30 feet in diameter, built within an enclosure with other huts where the attendants lived. All were kept very clean and well swept.' This tribute to the appearance and achievements of Ngoni women of high rank was borne out by my own observations in the 1930's in central and northern Nguniland. There was a definite physical type, light in colour, with high cheek-bones and orthognathic profile, tall with an upright carriage of the head. Women with these physical characteristics were in all cases of leading Swazi or trans-Zambesi clans, and their influence on their

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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571 585 our child who is now leaving her home. She has no father now. She is leaving his care. We expect you to cherish her now as her father would.' In reply the *induna* assured them, 'Now she is here we will cherish her, but she must respect the owner of this house and be under her in all things.' Speeches about the absence of disease in either village were then made and the men took snuff. The bridal party and the villagers all remained seated and began to sing *umbedlo* songs (songs to be sung sitting).

585 At the marriage at Ezondweni, where I was present, the girls of the bridal party began to shiver as night fell, and a woman of the village [533] brought a sleeping mat as an invitation to go into the huts. Singing as they went, the women of the bridal party were shown a place to sleep, and the bride slept among them for that night. The bride's party went [797] off the next morning to the church at Elangeni for the church marriage service, while the bridegroom with a party from Ezondweni went by a separate route. In the days before the mission came, they used to spend the morning dancing in the kraal, while the husband's family killed a beast, or more than one, for the feast. During the day's dancing in the kraal, the leader of the village women took the husband's spear, came into the kraal with the village party and touched the bride gently on the shoulder. This was a sign that the bride was now one of the village [152] group, and the correct response was for her party to turn their backs and weep to show their grief because she had left them.

In Ezondweni, when the parties returned from church in the afternoon, a large crowd had assembled. The bridal party danced and sang in the kraal and outside the *indlunkulu* and now and then a leading woman of the bridegroom's village joined in. The bride and two supporting friends were given a mat to sit on, the husband and the *madoda* also sat down, the minister from the church prayed and they sang a hymn. Then the food, bowls of *nsima* with large pieces of meat on top, was divided. The names of the divisions of Ezondweni were called out and the leaders of the divisions of that village and of other villages came to get the portions for their people.

Dancing continued after the feast until the bride's party took the bride to the husband's hut and left her there. The next morning the [533] bridal party returned home singing. Formerly the bride came to the door of the hut where she had slept with her husband, and called out the praise-names of her father. She then sang the *ummekezo* song (song of the deflowering) and the husband stood in the doorway behind her. Then he went into the kraal and sat facing the bridal party, who were singing. When the bride came in with a gourd of water there was silence while she poured water for him to wash his hands, mouth and eyes. This was the first public act of service for the husband after the consummation of the marriage and ended the main part of the ceremony, after which the bridal party went home.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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emphasized this, and was a reminder of their careful bringing up in their father's village surrounded by their attendant girls and older women.

Many of the *umsindo* songs referred to well-known events in Ngoni history. Others were warnings against jealousy when living in a polygynous household. One of these, said to be a lament of the women about the difficulties of polygynous households, was very popular in the northern kingdom and was used by Ngoni ministers in the churches when speaking against polygamy, even though the actual words of the song seemed to be referring to a historical event.

The boys and girls went through one common ceremony about the age of seven, when their second teeth were coming. The local tribes practised various forms of scarification, including facial tribal markings. The Ngoni never did this in the past and said that they despised it. Their distinctive marking was the piercing of the ear lobes in order to insert a small piece of reed, or a stud, or some beads. Formerly, when captives were taken in war, or when a village was conquered and annexed, the local people, especially the younger men, were forced to have their ears pierced as a condition of service in the regiments. After the Europeans came, the forcible ear-piercing was resisted by the local tribes, but among the Ngoni, especially those of trans-Zambesi clans, it continued to be practised, and I saw it being carried out in several villages. It was done in the dry cold-weather months, usually by one of the senior women of the children's family or house, and included all the children of about the same age who wanted to have their ears pierced. The woman pierced the lobe with a thorn, or a needle if she had one, and threaded some cotton through the hole. A day or so later they put in tiny bits of grass and replaced these with larger and larger bits until the hole was considered the right size.

After this ear-piercing ceremony, the boys' and girls' groups developed on their separate lines until their members became interested in each other as members of the opposite sex. Then, as I said at the beginning of the chapter, the groups of youths and girls were the two most prominent age groups in a village. They paid great attention to their clothes, washed with sweet-smelling leaves, used fats to anoint their hair, and the girls wore bead ornaments in their hair and on neck and wrists. Thus adorned, they spent their leisure time, especially in the cold weather after harvest, visiting other villages, usually in separate groups of youths and girls, except when they went as a team to dance *ngoma* in a neighbouring village.

In the social life of young people in Ngoni villages, the *ngoma* dance played an important part, especially in the northern kingdom. It took place after the harvest and was organized on a 'village team' basis. The boys practised their dance outside the cattle kraal in the evenings, and the girls did their dancing by themselves as a rule. But on the occasion

an *isanusi* today". When he entered the place of his sister, NaNdumbu, he was dreaming. If there was a war he could say "You must not go to that war because all the people will be killed." He was just dreaming and dancing his *isanusi* dance. When he danced that dance on the chief's *bwalo* the people praised him with special praises.'

Two informants remembered fragments of the songs sung by NaNdumbu and her brother, and these songs were also sung by the old *izanusi* in the northern kingdom. I give here the Ngoni versions with an English translation, omitting the repetition of lines and the 'sounds' which accompanied the singing:

Uyezwa mihlolo	Do you see the omens?
Inkanyezo ipuma	The star comes out,
Ipuma yanga	It comes out in the East.
. . . . .	. . . . .
Ubaba uyangibiza	My father is calling me.
Hamba ekaya	Go home.
Indaba zikuyandela	Things have turned against you,
Hamba ekaya	Go home.

Although these diviners acted at times on their own initiative, this did not prevent their being called on in time of crisis to diagnose the reason for disaster or sickness. *Izanusi* who used their own medicines to smell could prophesy and speak on their own initiative as well as waiting to be called on. These medicines were said to induce the dreams on which the prophecy was based, and they were generally contained in the tail of a gnu or in a sheep's horn, or some other horn.

Below this category of the prophets, whether *abantu benhloko* or *izanusi*, came those who used lots when called on to diagnose a particular situation. These were often men who dreamed, or who used their own medicines to receive messages from their ancestral spirits, but instead of announcing their message directly, they brought with them some form of lots which they used when they were consulted, and gave their diagnosis as a result of observing the lots. Sometimes they sang their own songs, accompanied by dancing, which led to an almost trance-like condition; sometimes they used their lots without any previous working up of an emotional state through song or dance. I never met any of the dreamer type of prophet who used no medicines and no lots. There was general agreement among the Ngoni that they had died out, that their main service had been in times of war, and that the number of men or women who possessed such powers had, even in the past, been very small indeed. I did, however, see one diviner at work who used the song and dance technique with the lots, and two who used the lots without song or dance.

The *isanusi* whom I saw in the northern kingdom was divining for sickness at the request of a party of people who had come to consult him

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854 When the baby cried, and it was not time to take him to his mother for suckling, the nurse girl jogged him up and
533 down on her back, and walked to and fro with him endlessly, crooning little lullabies to soothe the baby. Some of these lullabies were traditional, handed down from the older women, others were improvised by a nurse girl or copied by her from another.

539 Two traditional lullabies, well know in the Northern Ngoni kingdom, were as follows:

Hush my child;
Never mind, never mind,
Hush my child;
Never mind, never mind,
There is a busybody gossiping
There is a busybody gossiping
Ho! We reap the maize

Kholwane, Kholwane, son of Makhwaphuna,
What are you carrying?
I am carrying the food of the baby
For someone may go about defiling it
In the dark paths.

The following is an example of an impromptu lullaby which I heard from a nurse girl in the Northern kingdom:

Bu, bu, bu, bu,
The baby cries for its nurse and not for its mother.
Bu, bu, bu, bu,
She is coming to make gruel for the baby.
There she comes,
Bu, bu, bu, bu;
The baby sleeps.

853 The reference to the baby's food in two of the lullabies belongs to the second special feature of Ngoni infant care, the provision of baby food to supplement the mother's milk, and the arrangements for artificial feeding if the mother had

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related to a young child by kinship, there were three distinct age-groups. Nearest in age to him were his older sisters, children of his own mother, of his father's other wives, and of his father's brothers' wives. When he began to talk he addressed all these as 'sister', or rather as 'my sister', and they took a kindly interest in him, especially if he were a boy and therefore to be removed from them when the time came for him to live in the boys' dormitory. They played with him, they sometimes carried him abov the nurse girl did something else, they ground bul t or roasted ground-nuts to give him as snacks. Th e particularly concerned with teaching him to speak correctly, to say the right names for things, to use the correct terms for older people, and later to sing the refrains of little songs in their singing games.

Above this sister group in age came his own mother and his other 'mothers', who were his father's other wives and his father's brothers' wives. All of them he was taught to address as 'my mother'. His father's sisters on the other hand, who took a special interest in his upbringing, he addressed as 'woman father', and the name implied some measure of the authority which his father and his father's brothers exercised in the household and in the village.

Above this generation of mothers and woman-fathers came the grandmothers. Pre-eminent in supervising his life and the care taken of him was his father's own mother, but he also addressed as 'grandmother' his grandfather's other wives and his grandfather's brothers' wives.

The same triple grouping by age and generation, which the child learned by degrees to distinguish among his own kin, was repeated among the 'helpers' in his mother's and grandmother's households. There were young children who were the children of the household staff. His nurse girl and her fellow nurse girls formed a slightly senior group in this division, both by reason of their responsibilities as well as of their age. Above them, as the next generation, were the

FAMILY LIFE FOR THE YOUNG CHILD

In the dry season which was the dancing season children from three and four years upwards spent hours watching the older boys and girls dancing. On the edge of the main group small boys particularly would with intense solemnity and exaggerated movements practise steps and postures, singing meanwhile. The Ngoni used no drums and no musical instruments in their dancing, and despised the users of drums. All their rhythm and synchrony was achieved by perfect unison of action and voice. The little boys practising solo on the edge of a dance-group listened intently every now and then to get the rhythm correctly, shifted their feet and stamped with the rest.

The little girls were collected together by older girls now and then, and sometimes joined by the boys, to play games of catch and various miming games such as choosing a lover, hen and chickens, slave-raiding, baboons in the maize gardens. These were accompanied by songs in which the leader, or 'owner', of the game sang the story and the rest joined in the refrains. Many of these miming games called for alertness and co-operation, and the slow and solitary were soon shown up and laughed at. Another set of songs with refrains were ballads or stories without action, and these were listened to by the hour by the younger children towards the end of the day, especially if the singer of the ballad was a lively narrator.

Girl children of this age-group spent a lot of their time watching adults and older girls doing their household work. In time they learned to imitate the actions of pounding and grinding, using a small pole or a stone, of sweeping with a frayed-out stalk, of winnowing or sieving with a little basket, or ladling food with a tiny wooden spoon. When they went to the gardens with their mother, they were given a small branch to carry home on their heads for the fire. Later the little girls had a tiny pot put on their head, perched on a miniature grass carrying-ring and went to the water-hole with their nurse girl to fill it and carry it home without spilling the water.

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All of them made their own axes, knobkerries and catapults for hunting. Some were interested in music and made shepherds' pipes, or one-stringed lyres, or hand pianos of metal strips affixed to a wooden base. They composed their own songs and airs for these instruments. Others showed ingenuity in making elaborate models of lorries and aeroplanes, or in carving heads of animals. Others liked to weave fibre into the wide-brimmed hats some herd-boys wore.

More significant still for their future social relationships, they began now to choose their own intimate friend and to form the friendship pacts which were characteristic of Ngoni society, and regarded by adults as important in the child's development. In the friendship pacts, especially those between boys, there was no implied or manifest restraint. They could have 'joking relations', and hence say outrageous things to each other. They could quarrel and make it up, and defy each other's wishes and decisions, without a final breach. The relationship between friends often lasted into later adult life, and was probably all the stronger for the occasional lapses and outbursts, and by the fact that in the daily companionship of friends the burden of observing 'respect' did not oppress them.

The boys' dormitory

The hut known as the boys' dormitory and the whole system of living which it represented was a traditional feature of Ngoni village life. In their culture it had three main purposes. Formerly, when as they said 'War was our school', it was the place where boys slept and lived together, and where they learned to defend themselves and to obey authority. It was in a sense the preparatory school for the regiment, and the herding of cattle was the basis of the curriculum. Once a boy went to sleep in a dormitory he never left it until he married, unless he was seriously ill. In the days of warfare, he learned in the dormitory and out herding the cattle, a knowledge of the bush and its wild life and of his fellows, and

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returning from work in the south about every two years or so, even if it was only for temporary residence in the village, mitigated, though only to some extent, the social disintegration and upheaval caused by the absence of so many young men.

In pre-European days, girls waited to marry for five to ten years after attaining puberty. For high-born Ngoni girls a further 'pre-marriage' ceremony and ritual took place immediately before marriage. This was after the girl and young man accepted by her as a 'lover' had been courting for some time but before any formal betrothal took place which involved the approach of the two families through intermediaries, and the discussions about the transfer of cattle. The Ngoni said that this pre-marriage rite was the equivalent for the girls of taking the head-ring for the men, because when it was held it was a public declaration that marriage was now possible for the girl, and she was acknowledged as having reached adult, that is married women's, status.

This ceremony began by the senior women of the girl's home sending for her father and saying to him: 'This child is now grown up. She is ready to be prepared to enter the state of adulthood.' One of the Ngoni names for the ceremony meant—'staying in the hut as if fasting'—a ritual practice associated with rain-making by the Paramount, and with taking 'medicines' for strengthening a new Paramount or chief on his accession. The girl, with her companion, spent two or three days in a hut, hidden behind upright mats curved so that no one could see round them. They were naked except for a long soft leather cloak worn over one shoulder and tied under the right arm. During this seclusion they had food brought to them by the senior women of the girl's house. While the girls were hidden away the village women cooked quantities of meat and brewed beer to entertain friends and relatives of the girl's father. During the feasting and drinking the senior women, with the men, danced the special dances and sang the songs associated with this ritual. Some of

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the songs had veiled allusions to sexual intercourse and sex organs but the majority were songs recalling historical events. Others warned young wives against jealousy and strife in polygamous households, and these again were couched in veiled language, because the Ngoni preferred allusive references to anything touching on sex life.

When the girl and her companion emerged from the hut of seclusion, they were fully dressed in a short leather skirt, cut on a circular pattern, and a long leather cloak often trimmed with a fringe of tiny brass bells or small copper beads which were heirlooms belonging to the girl's father's house. The girl who was known as the 'owner of the pre-marriage ceremony' wore strips of meat strung together like beads hanging over her chest. The fat from the kidneys (always used in Ngoni ritual) was twisted into a necklace, and the skins of cows' tails, flayed and spread out were worn hanging from the waist, one in front and one behind. At the close of the ceremonies the skins and fat used for ornament were burned by a stream and the ashes swept into the water —again a typical Ngoni ritual act.

In one sense this ritual was a form of social announcement that the girl was now ready for marriage, and the marriage negotiations and full marriage ceremony followed soon after. It was also a way of emphasizing the father's pride in his daughter, and he showed it by the lavish feasting and beer, by the standard of performance of the dances and songs and by decorating the girl with meat, fat, and skins from the cattle of his house. This was the last act he performed on behalf of his daughter, for the actual marriage ceremony took place at the bridegroom's village. It showed him as a man of substance, because only rich men and leading men could afford the outlay. It also showed the girl as a virtuous woman, for the ritual was never performed unless the girl was a virgin, and the senior women had been able, after examining her, to say to her father: 'Her cattle are full.'

This ritual was given up about the time the missions began

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173 parallel of the Jews of the Old Testament preparing the way
177 for the Christian era to illustrate and drive home their belief
797 that they, the Ngoni, had prepared the way for the Christian Gospel in Nyasaland. 'Were we not also a people who hated idols and images? We too tried to reach the Great God through our ancestor spirits, but we failed, until the mission came to teach us.' 'We held together the people of this land under one rule so that the missionaries could travel safely and spread the Gospel teaching.' These beliefs were stated so often that they became almost standard formula, and the incongruity of this picture with some of the warlike situations recorded by the earliest missionaries was ignored and forgotten. In the churches, where the people sat on mats, Sunday by Sunday, facing their Ngoni ministers, rising to sing, in
● [533] their typical Ngoni harmonies, Christian hymns set to former Ngoni war tunes—in this setting Ngoni history was brought home, interwoven with the new teaching, to young adults who formed the majority of the congregation. For Ngoni elders it was something more than a reminder of their past. It was setting the Ngoni people in a special relationship to
[186] the European missionaries and the new learning, compensating for the passing of military power and political supremacy by establishing Ngoni cultural superiority over their neighbours. This gave some spiritual reassurance to a people in the throes of political change, and it was a lesson which lost none of its significance for the young adults who heard it.

Ngoni law

671 'There was one law for all the people. No one could be ignorant of the law.' These were the words, quoted in Chapter I,
[182] which the Ngoni used frequently to describe the importance of law in their culture, its role in the political unification of their own and subject peoples, and the responsibility, laid on all adults, for knowledge of the law and conformity with its demands. An incident in a court of law, which was unfor-
692 gettable to an anthropologist, was a case in which a chief sat

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the Paramount and all the Ngoni leaders. Part of their excitement was expressed by the youths in whistling, an accomplishment much esteemed by the Ngoni. Herd-boys learned to whistle in one fashion in imitation of birds to lure them to the traps. They whistled in another way to make the cattle move faster to and from the grazing grounds, and in a more provocative way to stir up the bulls to fight. They whistled signals to each other over long distances across the valleys, and they practised whistling at all kinds of times 'to make the tongue more nimble'. By the time they were young men they were skilled whistlers, ready to perform as an accompaniment to the individual dancers celebrating a lion kill, or to the team of youths and girls in the *ngoma* dance.

Other skills

After the wealth to be earned from cattle, the excitement of the chase and the fame acquired by lion-hunts, most other pursuits seemed tame to young Ngoni men, especially those related to cultivation. They got some fun however out of the occasional communal hoeing-parties for clearing new land, or terracing land already cleared. A gang of young men would challenge another to do an appointed task in a given time. The two parties would fall to, hoeing in a line, shouting encouragement to each other and insults to their rivals such as: 'You! You are just women. See how you hoe with your arms bent'—with bursts of whistling and singing to keep up the tempo of work.

The same gang spirit, calling for swift co-ordination and good humour, showed in the role played by young men when a hut was being built. Their part was to dig a wide shallow pit, break up the clods of earth, and pour in water carried to them by the women. Then they trampled the mud until it was mixed ready for the women to plaster on the walls. As they trampled they sang and whistled and stamped with the high knee-bending movement of the *ngoma* dance, emerging finally red-brown from toe to thigh, laughing at

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might be a chore but when it was done in the open it was also an advertisement of high standards.

The art of speech

The Ngoni believed that as boys and girls neared adult life they should be well drilled in the art of speaking, because it was regarded as a basic Ngoni characteristic. We have seen how adults watched children tossing riddles at each other to test, among other things, their quickness of speech. Girls had been watched telling stories to see how they held their audience and showed a sense of dramatic values in recitation.

In all the standardized forms of speech such as greetings, messages, announcements, responses, young adults were expected to speak clearly and correctly, without mumbling but not too loudly. When relating an event, such as a visit, a bull-fight, or when giving evidence in the courts, they had to give an orderly account without repetition. Otherwise they were told: 'You are speaking badly. Tell it again, in order, from the beginning.' An ordered sequence of the narrative was always demanded, and, as we shall see in the next chapter, they used proverbs frequently to impress on people speaking the need to get to the point, while leaving out nothing of importance.

The art of words used with music in songs was regarded as a special gift and those who possessed it were encouraged to develop it. Inspiration for words and music was as we have seen something which came 'from the chest' and was regarded almost as if it was a special kind of breathing. Some used this gift to sing with a solo instrument such as a stringed lyre. Others used it to compose new songs for *ngoma* dances. Others again wrote Christian hymns and composed music for them, or set them to traditional Ngoni tunes.

The art of dancing

'Ngoni people think that their dances show their personality, their manhood, that which was born in them.' Phrases like

837 If a women believes that her husband is committing adultery with another woman she endeavours to find out who the woman is. She 578 usually refuses to speak to her when they meet, and if they are forced to come into contact, as at a beer party, there is likely to be a fight between them. A parturient woman may ask her midwife to pretend that there are difficulties in labour so that her husband can be called upon to confess his adultery and name his mistress.

864 The sexual aspect of marriage influences the training and experiences of children. The explanation given for moving children from their parents' hut to a dormitory at the age of six or seven is that by then children are 'wise enough' and will talk to their playmates about their parents' sexual activities in the hut. Girls aged [897] five years or so start to imitate the dances of their elders and to join in the dance competitions when girls come from other villages. [533] Many of the songs sung at these dances are concerned with various aspects of sexual relations. At age ten, or sometimes earlier they [535] also begin to practice the most important of the women's erotic dances, *cimwangalala*,[11] which is performed only indoors. At a 881 girl's first menstruation she is secluded for from a few days up to a 864 month, and is tested by women who have borne children to see that she can dance *cimwangalala* and other erotic dances effectively, that she knows the formalities of copulation, and how to behave when she menstruates. Even where the girl is secluded for the full month, and her training is accompanied by a great deal of symbolism and ceremonial, there is little reference to her potential fertility.

864 There is no formal instruction in sexual matters for boys, and there are no erotic dances for them. They learn their sexlore from their older companions in the bush or in the dormitory. The only [831] specific aspect of sexual maturation that appears to receive emphasis is the growth of large testicles, and boys brew themselves medicines to expedite this.

842 Both fertility and sexual satisfaction can be facilitated by the use 830 of medicines. There is a well-known medicine for the cure of barrenness, and there are many kinds of aphrodisiacs.[12] A girl [864] learns the use of aphrodisiacs from other women in the village, and she is formally taught sexual behaviour by her puberty instructress.[13] The old woman who is in charge of her puberty seclusion, who is 881 sometimes the girl's grandmother, supervises the sexual behaviour 593 of the girl for the first few years of her married life. If, as a bride, she succeeds in forcing her husband to give her a present before she will lie with him, the present must be handed over to the puberty instructress the next morning. Later she may demonstrate her [535] erotic proficiency by dancing[14] in the hut before her husband and her instructress.

[11] Meaning, in Nsenga, 'the thing of you just sleeping' (i.e. copulating).
[12] Such as *miototo*, a root, and *kajolejole*, a plant.
[13] *Mphungu*.
[14] The dance is called *cikapa*. Cf. Nyanja *kapakapa*, swinging backwards and forwards.

593 Some men when they decide to return home from work in the
167 normal course of events do not let their relatives know that they will be arriving. There are a variety of reasons for this, one being that the mystical hazards of the journey home are increased if a man's enemies know that it is taking place. There is also sometimes the desire to check on the fidelity of a wife. A chief returning from the railway line in 1947 reached Fort Jameson and sent on ahead a man to tell the people their chief had returned. A councillor who was with him remarked 'What sort of chief is this who gives his queens time to get back to their own houses? We ought to arrive suddenly and catch them all with their lovers.'

593 The woman's kin also wish to avoid trouble in her marriage and
167 do what they can to prevent her committing adultery if they think
602 that her husband is still treating her well. They talk to her about her obligations to her absent husband and if they think she cannot be trusted, one of them, perhaps the woman's mother, may sleep in the hut with her to see that she does not entertain lovers there. They may warn her that if she is taken to court for adultery they will not support her.

Thus we see that there is social prescription not only of the ways in which a man and his affines should behave towards each other, but also of the ways in which his affines should behave when the man is away. Similarly a woman and her affines interact in the light of their relationship not only when her husband is present but also when he has been absent for years. As a husband can exceed his rights over his wife, so can an affine go beyond what is tolerated while trying to safeguard the interests of an absent husband. The perseverence of some brothers of absent husbands, and the limitations imposed on their actions by public opinion, are recalled by a girls' song current in 1949.

● [533]

I am wanting to go and sleep,
What stops me is something in the loins,
I go to the water, and the one who keeps on following comes,
He has exceeded his sibling-in-law-ship,[18]
He has dragged Eleni from the reeds.

Eleni is supposed to be the wife of a labour migrant. Her husband's brother follows her to the stream, where she has gone ostensibly [607] to draw water, as he thinks that she is really going to meet a lover. She hides in the reeds and he drags her out. Such active intervention is inappropriate and dangerous for if there is a struggle the woman is likely to claim that the man was trying to rape her. The astute brother-in-law would have waited his time until he could catch her red-handed with her lover in a village.

167 It is never legitimate for a woman whose husband is a labour
837 migrant to have intercourse with another man. People regret that

[193]

[18] *Ulamu*, the abstract noun formed from *mulamu*, sibling-in-law.

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766 wash the body, but only the face. The water they use they do not draw from the well where people drink, but take water from a running stream. The body is not anointed with oil. Then they take the spleen of an ox and deck his head till it all glitters, and then take the skin of an ox, killed that very day, and bind him in it. But do not wrap it round his head, but only as far as the neck, and take the fat from the ox's belly and throw it over him. Then he is set on a stone and the cup filled with beer.

II. The body remains in the hut four days, and bands of warriors sound their shields without ceasing. When the body begins to stink, oil is brought and poured in a dish and set fire to. On the fifth day, they lift the body, the child whom the dead chief had named as his successor leads, and all the relations follow, and the wives of the dead chief. The warriors come in companies, village by village. Very old men bear the corpse. It is carried upright. When they come with it to the water, if it be running fully they do not dam it up, should it be low they dam it across with stones and mud, and down stream becomes quite dry. Then they begin to lay firewood on some rock in the stream, and bring the corpse and put it on the pile and take more wood and prop it up on the sides. When they have finished piling up the wood an old white-haired man makes fire, and when the hot ashes fall blows it into flame and sets fire to the pyre, and the flames go roaring up. They place the child [and heir] where the smoke is blowing to. He stands on one leg, his shield is in his hand. When the fire bursts out in sparks the men clash their shields and chant their war songs—

766 539 533 III. "This thing (that has befallen),
Have you heard these things, wife of an old man?"

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"Wage war on the *Afo*,
Hayo, hayo, ho,
They have left him;
They have left him in their midst."

"*Humba*, the mighty medicine man, has gone with them,
He has swallowed a magic horn, has *Humba*."

766 The shield of the chief, which he was wont to carry (*kugwira*), they burn on a fire at one side, and all his household belongings. When the fire has burned out, and the corpse also is consumed and turned to ashes, water is splashed over (the spot). Should the stream have been dammed they pull down the barrier, and all the ashes go down the *Mawi* (a river). When they see all is finished a sheep is killed, they take a wooden spoon and catch the blood and place it on the rock. Then they skin the sheep, cut it open, take the stomach, turn out the contents on the rock, and smear it over. The elders only eat the meat. When they have done this they go off to the village and kill many oxen, the people [231] still keeping up the rolling sound with their shields. All the ornamental tufts of grass from the hut roofs belonging to the chief are removed.

765 766 IV. Next morning all the headmen shave their heads, and then the people from the different villages. The widows put on the red head-bands. Then they allow three days to pass, and on the fourth every one assembles and the new chief stands at the village court on one leg. 643 One old man steps out and says, "Do you hear, your new chief is so and so" (naming him by his clan-animal name). Then every one shouts, "Hail," and the thunder of their shields is heard, and all around is a mass of waving plumes (trans. *biriwiri*). Then the elders

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

thrown away the day she comes out of the *tsimba* hut.) [881]

II. On the seventh day, before dawn, one of the old women rises and makes a shrill noise with her tongue, then old matrons only collect and go with the girl to the stream. Should the maiden formerly have been of an insolent nature, she is tied up in a bundle of grass and thrown into the water. The old women warm themselves over a fire on the bank. When the sun gets hot, she is taken out, and set on the bank, and they commence to dance and pull her about, and reprove her, saying, "You there, listen; I sent you to go and draw water for me, and you refused. You said, 'I am not a slave.' But could you have come to the water here to-day? She who has brought you here, is not she that very old creature?" Then she is given all sorts of advice. When they have finished they shave her head and pubes, and rub her with oil and adorn her with beads. Then the old woman who is head of the ceremony takes her up on her back, and as they go they sing— [302]

"Wrinkles, mother, wrinkles,
I was at my own home, and never a wrinkle, [539]
I came among the Angoni,
I saw wrinkles, [533]
Wrinkles, O!
Things like this all fall on me.
Maiden cluck like an old sitting hen,
How can I cluck, I am only a young bird?
Cluck."

When they come with her to her mother's house, they sing—

"Tumbling about the things in her mother's hut.
In the hut that is no longer hers."

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must perish indeed. Give your children the rains, there is the beer we have given you." Then the people begin to clap their hands and sound the *nkulungwani;* they sing, swaying their bodies backwards and forwards, and keep saying, "Pardon, pardon." When they have finished propitiating, they take the beer that remains and dip a cup in and give every one to drink, just a little, no one is short, and even the children are made to sip it. When they have finished they take branches of trees and commence to dance and sing—

"This little cloud, and this,
This little cloud, and this,
Let the rains come with this little cloud.
Give us water,
Our hearts are dry,
Krōle.
Give us water,
Our hearts are dry,
Krōle."

When they come to the village they find an old woman has drawn water in readiness, and put it at the doorway, and the people begin to dip in their branches and wave them aloft, scattering the drops, and then they see the rain come in heavy storm-clouds.

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535 755 782 787 feather head-dress, and in her hand she holds a little stick (for a spear), and her calico is tied round her waist, and her breasts swing free. The songs they sing at the Kanonomera dance go thus—

533 755 539 What knocks off the dew,
Comes at the early dawn.—(*Repeat.*)

Looking, gazing, we just gaze one at the other.
(*Repeat.*)

When the drum sounds it is the *choinjoli* drum that brings the spirit.—(*Repeat.*)

Far away there, far away,
Far away there, far away,
Far away where shines white that little cloud,
Far away there, is my bow.

Little quail, little quail, you are picking up the little grains.
And what if he is,
Are they not his eyes?
It broke his leg for him;
Only hunger, only hunger.

Oh no, indeed, indeed,
Two wives have been too many for him indeed;
Two wives have been too many for him indeed.

You hate me,
You hate me for my being so old.—(*Repeat.*)

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Little maiden, whom war has given me,
Should you refuse to be mine,
I am as a slave in my grief,
And then what must you do?

We were far away;
Our companions had cut off their head rings.

XXVII

THE NTETEREZI DANCE

539
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[764]

It is danced only at a funeral.

Scrape out the beer pot and give me.
Have some sense, the beer is finished.

He is the husband who favours your companion (*i.e.* his second wife),
And you, you only cook and give him, all in silence;
And here you return,
And weep against the hut post.

Should you be a childless man,
Do not be hitting your neighbour's child,
That's so, father.
Don't you think you should go and beat that maize you planted?
That's so, father.

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539 She has left him sleeping there, de de;
533 She has left the home he made her, de de;
She has left him.

The man who is in my home;
Yes, yes, father.
From the way he leans against the hut post (all indifferent to my charms)
You would think he had been drinking beer.

What, you say you would marry *me*?—
You of the goat-skin (loin cloth).
No, father; oh no, father;
You of the goat-skin.

Mother! mother!
Did she go to send you,
Saying, "When he comes you must abuse him?"

Oh stop that fidgeting and turning;
Stop saying, "I must so."
Stop saying, "I must thus."
We do not want that.

You have brought in vain your wooden pillow;
I do not wish you,
I do not want you.

Should you kill a little mouse, go and give it to your sister.
With one's wives it's do this, do that for them, and then they leave you.
We have said so; we have said so.

6:Rattray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

XXVIII

THE KANDENGA DANCE

In dancing this dance the women stand in line on one side, the men in a line on another, the drums are where the men are; then a woman goes and takes the knobkerry from a man, and the man goes back with her to where the women are, and again they return and stand close together. The man places one hand on the woman's shoulder, and they dance thus, and when they have done dancing the woman turns round and hands the man his knobkerry. The Kandenga is danced at a funeral, but also just for fun when the moon is shining.

A white-haired man is malt;
On his coming, let him make beer;
Yes, father.
On his coming he shall make beer.

Towards the river to *Likongwe*
A cloud shines white like some little bird, maybe,
But it's those Angoni; they always said
"That's a rich little spot where the *Nsugudzi* flows."

I am an unmarried maiden, and one of Njolo's men will be my lord,
De, de.
The youths from here think too much of themselves.
Did not one say, I was his,
De, de.
The youths of here are too conceited.

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

539 Place your hand upon her shoulder in the dance.
533 Place your hand up her shoulder whom you love.
This season there is no bow (*i.e.* war).

Oh, oh, oh.
I have come to the wedding.
The porridge they have cooked with the finger.
(It is so badly made.)

Oh belt, belt, belt,
Belt, belt,
Why should I not borrow the belt,
When the dance has sounded?

XXIX

THE CHITOTO DANCE

535 They dance it at a mourning, and even just for
[534] fun. They do not have drums, but fasten rattles on
their legs.

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539 One perhaps has taken the other,
533 Summoned him for love of him,
And to-day we mourn, love;
Yes, father,
And the cock crows.

Should your neighbour's son not have a wife,
Look after his belly,
His belly,
His belly, wo, ha, ho!
I have sung.

6:Rattray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

Should you have no child by your neighbour's daughter,
Give her your friend, and he shall wed her;
As for you, you be happy with the beer pot,
With the beer pot, wo, ha, ho!
You be content with the beer pot.

XXX

THE KUNJU DANCE

Men do not dance it, but only women, with the men looking on.

You, Nzinyai, you, Nzinyai,
Nzinyai, she refuses hospitality to the strangers,
You, Nzinyai.
The porridge which I have not seen;
Nzinyai, return whence you came.

The man who is in my hut begins to refuse his food; when I only dish him out two helpings of porridge, he looks aside;
When I dish him out three (he says), "Give me the water (to wash his hands). I shall give the child his."
But that child he is wise,
"Eat up your porridge," says he; "was it not you who scolded at me?"
Now, what do you think of that? My child he knows how to conduct a quarrel.
A quarrel they settle at the village court.

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

XXXI

OTHER SONGS

539
533 Moon, you must shine, shine that I may eat the tadpoles;
I sit on a stone, and my bones all rattle.
If it were not for my big mouth,
The maidens would be crying for me.
(The song of the night-jar.)

That great bird has gone in there,
Gone to the other side there,
Gone and got a snake there;
The very snake that told me of misfortune,
Told me of misfortune, e! e! e!
Which foretold evil at the site of the deserted village.

Frog you, frog you,
Your friend, your friend.
Frog you, frog you,
He is calling his wife.
Jump squat, jump squat,
He is calling his wife.
(The frog's song.)

Dawn, day; dawn, day;
The Tsambe mouse is finishing other folk's food.
(The song of the *ndongera* mouse, that eats during the day.)

Stay a little yet, night; stay a little yet, night;
While I eat with you.
(The song of the *Tsambe* mouse, that eats only at night.)

8: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5

The Fort Jameson Ngoni[3] are at this stage of transition. Many men and some women can read, if not write, and we can no longer call the tribe non-literate. Yet a society of this kind behaves in many ways as if it were non-literate. In particular, information about the past is transmitted orally and laws and customs are not committed to writing. In this paper I shall discuss some of the ways in which this information is manipulated. I shall distinguish between tales of fighting, relating to the period 1821–1898, which we may regard as tribal legends of origin; beliefs about customary behaviour relating to the same period; private legends which serve to explain the form of relations between present-day groups; and lastly history proper, documents describing contemporary events, if such exist.

Early travellers all speak of the various Ngoni groups as fierce warrior tribes interested only in destruction and plunder. With the spread of European control Ngoni raids ceased. Today in villages inhabited mainly by women and children, with scraggy animals and eroded gardens, the traveller looking for signs of a military tradition sees only khaki greatcoats and battle-dress. Among the Fort Jameson group, if not elsewhere, the great cowhide shields, and the regiments which carried them, have disappeared. Yet the battles of the past are still remembered and are called to mind in songs sung at drunken parties, in tales told to children and, importunately, to sympathetic strangers. Many of these songs are in the old Ngoni language now largely forgotten, and singers cannot give any precise meaning to the songs they sing. They are the relics of the past learnt parrot-fashion and in the context in which they are sung they do not require any specific reference. In our own culture we do not need to know who were the April rainers before we can sing "Green grow the rushes, O". Prose tales, however, are in ordinary speech and describe military exploits of people known to the speaker, or preparations for raiding ordered by the Paramount Chief and carried out by his lieutenants. The most frequently recounted battle of all is the fight between Ngoni and British troops in 1898. Many men and women are still alive who remember the fighting or even took part in it. The cataclysmic changes which followed the Ngoni defeat and the unusual weapons used combine to make the battle memorable. It is the only admitted defeat, for all other tales tell only of victory. The Ngoni defeated the Bemba, Wisa, Cewă, Kunda, and so on.

We know from contemporary travellers' accounts that though on the whole the Ngoni were successful against their neighbours, their run of successes was not unbroken. There is evidence that on occasion even the Cewa raided the Ngoni and took captives. We may regard the form taken by these legends as due in part to the process found in most cultures by which victories are remembered and defeats forgotten. But the distortion introduced is not only the elimination of defeat. The Administration and the Missions have,

3. I worked among these people during 1946–49 while on the staff of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5

portant chiefs. The Paramounts have told me that occasionally at their biannual ' meeting of chiefs ' and *indunas*, some recital of history is made, especially if they want to quote a precedent or examine an old custom with a view to change. This historical tradition therefore is alive and has a recognized function in regulating Ngoni life. In one area part of it has been written in the vernacular and is used as a school history book.[1] In the other areas the Paramounts have spoken of the need for something of the same kind, as they recognize that with the coming of modern education it is an effective way of training the young in the traditions of the Ngoni past.

In addition to recitals of tradition by ' historians ' there are many other reminders of the Ngoni past which are constantly before the people. An adequate examination of Ngoni history as it is expressed in their institutions and standardized behaviour would need an article to itself. I shall only mention here some ways and occasions through which tradition and old Ngoni institutions are brought before the people.

1. The praise songs of chiefs, war songs, regimental songs, names of famous regiments, and prayers for rain. These contain references, often rather obscure, to events and persons in the past. The praise songs are sung, or rather shouted, on special occasions, as when thanking the chief for beer, by members of important clans who alone know the words. The war songs and regimental songs recall the great days of conquest, and are sung and danced in war dress at big gatherings at the Paramount's village or at other chief's villages. The prayers for rain invoke the names of great chiefs in old days, but are now only a memory as they are no longer used in ceremonies—at least in none that I have found so far.

2. The names of prominent landmarks, such as hills and rivers where great chiefs built their villages and fights took place. Herd boys will point out a river and say, ' That is where Mtwalo built when he came from Choma ', or ' That hill is where Singu hid in the Azungu war '. The historical events attached to these places are widely known and constantly before people's eyes in the diversified landscape of hills and valleys.

3. Important village names. During the trek north, the names of

[1] In Mwambera's country.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

535 628 is now danced by villages. The important men in one village suggest to another village that this dance should be held in the latter village. If this is agreed, beer is brewed in the second village and on the prearranged day many people from the first village come in procession from their village to the dance. The visiting dancers enter the cattle byre and start to dance. They are joined by people from the home village. The dancers are arranged in two lines, men on one side and women on the other, and the dance consists of a series of virtuoso performances by two or three men and women at a time in the space between the two lines, to the accompaniment of clapping and antiphonal singing. The dance is followed by drinking and more dancing. Later in the year, or in the next year, the host village goes to the home of the visitors, and the performance is repeated.

●[533]

535 628 883 Of more frequent occurrence are dances involving girls only. These are usually held on Sunday afternoons, and as at the *ngoma* dances, at least two villages are involved. Here the initiative is taken not by the important men but by the senior unmarried girl in the village. She invites a girl of similar status in another village with whom she is acquainted, or whom she has seen dancing, to bring a team of girls to dance in her village. This kind of dance is competitive in that the visitors are opposed by a similar team of girls from the home village, who dance separately from the visitors until, at the end of the session, the two teams combine. That team which has danced best is held to be the winner, although there is always great doubt as to which team this is. The girl who invited the visitors is responsible for seeing that the visiting team is fed, although beer is not provided. No work is done in the gardens on Sundays, so that these dances always attract a large number of onlookers. As with *ngoma*, a return match is danced at some later date. The pairs of villages that are linked in these dance exchanges are not always those that contain many people related to one another. One girl may ask an acquaintance in another village to find a team; in one case the girl who made the invitation did not know the name of the girl she was inviting.

Beer-drinking

273 [271] [574] [272] Beer, water, and tea are the three main drinks of the Ngoni. The ordinary rules of hospitality govern the drinking of water, which is provided for the traveller whenever he asks for some. Tea is sold in the roadside stores known as hotels. Beer is more important socially

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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797 795 Central Africa. The U.M.C.A. subsequently concentrated its activities in another part of the District, so that the two main denominations are now the Dutch Reformed Church and the Catholic Church. There was for a time a branch of the Livingstonia Mission (Free Church of Scotland) in the area, while more recently a Seventh Day Adventist Mission has begun work. Since 1924 there have been some adherents to the Watch Tower[1] amongst the Ngoni, but this movement did not become important until some years later.

797 872 [875] Primary education is carried on in mission schools subsidized by the Administration, but there is also a Native Authority school over which the chiefs exercise some influence and which is to some extent supported by Native Treasury funds. The teachers in the elementary schools live in the villages, but they do not exercise very much influence outside their classrooms. This does not appear to have been the case in the past, when there was greater hostility between the different missions and when the missions tended to disregard the tribal authorities. The teachers then seem to have set themselves up as headmen on their own, and schools were built without the permission of the local headmen. In many cases where the issue between the missions was undecided, there were two schools in the same village. In the middle 'thirties many of these so-called schools were closed on the initiative of the Administration and the teachers who remain are now more interested in education than in politics.

872 [535] [533] A village school serves more than one village, so that the children of a neighbourhood containing, say, half a dozen villages get to know each other and visit in each other's villages. Certain dances and songs, known as *konsert*, are performed by parties of schoolchildren going from one village to another, and this leads to similar inter-village dancing in the evenings organized by groups of boys. At the end of term a number of schools of the same denomination combine to perform a rather more elaborate programme of songs and dances, and these displays are attended by many adults.

797 794 797 The deacons and evangelists are of greater importance in the political life of the tribe than are the school teachers. Deacons take a certain initiative in settling disputes in the village, and they report to their missions deaths and serious sins that affect their people. They arrange for religious instruction for catechumens and may on occasion organize opposition to some practice that has been declared wrong by the mission. Evangelists are responsible for a number of villages and

[1] The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.